History of St. Mark's
1932-1963

In the year 1932 St. Mark's Church celebrated its Centennial Year. Mr. John Gossling wrote a history of the Church which was published in that Centennial Year. Thirty-one years have elapsed since then, and the time has come to record, in brief, the progress of St. Mark's in the first three decades of its second century.

Any historical sketch must of necessity leave out much detail. Consequently, it is the lack of space, and not the lack of importance which must excuse any omissions from this brief, categorical presentation.

The Clergy

After the death of The Reverend Leslie F. Potter on July 17, 1932, Dr. Herbert Parrish was called to continue the work as Priest-in-Charge. He concluded the Centennial celebration, serving from August 1932 until May, 1933. At a special meeting of the Vestry June 1, 1933, The Reverend Edmund H. Carhart presided as Rector for the first time. Mr. Carhart was instituted as Rector by Bishop Francis M. Tait, on September 24, 1933. Mr. Carhart served St. Mark's from 1933 until the time of his death, November 26, 1944. The Rt. Reverend Oliver J. Hart conducted funeral services November 29, 1944.

For the months that St. Mark's was without a Rector, the Vestry secured the services of Dr. Charles H. Long, assisted by The Reverend William La Rue Witmer.

On April 9, 1945, the Vestry resolved to call The Reverend Albert F. Fischer Jr. to St. Mark's as Rector. Mr. Fischer assumed the Rectorship June 1, 1945, and continues to date as the eigth Rector in history of the Parish.

Henry S. Spackman	1846-1853
Daniel S. Miller	1853-1881
Robert C. Booth	1881-1889
Frederick B. Avery	1889-1892
John B. Harding	1893-1921
Leslie F. Potter	1921-1932
Edmund H. Carhart	1933-1944
Albert F. Fischer Jr.	1945-

During Mr. Fischer's Rectorship there have been a number of Curates at St. Mark's. These are: William Witmer, Arthur Laedlein, E. Clarindon Hyde, Robert Back, Charles Kelbaugh, James Donker, Edward Chinn, and currently, Edward Loeffler.

The Music

In 1932 Mr. James Tillbury was director of music and Miss Anna Newton was organist. The outstanding activities of the choir during the years following our Centennial celebration were the production of several Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. Mr. Tillbury resigned in 1945.

Mrs. David MacGregor, the former Anna Newton, became director of music as well as organist. Under Mrs. MacGregor's leadership our three choirs (Boys, St. Cecelia, and Adult) grew in size and fame.

In 1957 the new organ was installed. It was built by Aeolian-Skinner Organ Co. of Boston and designed by Mr. Ernest Willoughby of Bryn Mawr. The dedicatory recital was played by Mr. Alec Wyton, Organist of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, on December 1, 1957. This dedication was part of the celebration of the 125th Anniversary of the founding of the Church. On January 26, 1958, Mr. Ernest Willoughby gave an organ recital demonstrating the beauty and power of the organ he designed.

There have been many musical programs offered to the Parish and to the community. With the coming of the new organ, these programs have increased in number and magnitude. In 1958 the famous Gettysburg College Choir presented a Sacred Music Concert; in 1959 Marilyn Mason, faculty member of the University of Michigan, gave an organ recital which was attended by music lovers from all parts of the Delaware Valley.

On Sunday evening, June 5, 1960, nearly every organist in the Delaware Valley was seen in the capacity audience that flocked to St. Mark's to hear Virgil Fox give his first local recital since his appearance with the Philadelphia Orchestra several seasons before.

Other famous musical offerings included the Columbus Boy's Choir, which came to St. Mark's in 1960; Marie-Claire Alain, French organist on her first American tour in 1961 (her only appearance in this area); the Temple University Choir in 1961, and a number of organ concerts given by such famous names as Karl Richter, Claire Coci, Temple Painter and many fine young students and artists.

Mrs. David MacGregor was honored at the Annual Choir Banquet, April 21, 1961. She served 30 years as organist and 16 years as choir director. The Vestry and Congregation presented Mrs. MacGregor with a mink stole and money for the purchase of music for the choir library. Her husband, David, was presented with a resolution making him a Vestryman Emeritus.

In June of 1961, Mr. and Mrs. MacGregor left St. Mark's to make their home in Spartenburg, South Carolina - where Mr. MacGregor was relocated in the Southern Office of his Firm. Thus ended the very long and excellent period in which Mrs. MacGregor labored for the music of St. Mark's.

In the year following Mrs. MacGregor, two organists supplied (Miss Cynthia Eney and Mr. Francis Murphy) until Mr. Ted Alan Worth became

Organist and Choirmaster in September of 1962. Under Mr. Worth, a Choral Evensong was presented in honor of the famous composer and musician David McK. Williams, on Whitsunday, 1961. The composer was present for this Service, and gave an Address. St. Mark's currently offers Organ Concert Series, given by famous Artists, and the musical excellence and fame of St. Mark's continues to spread.

125th Anniversary

The 125th Anniversary of the founding of St. Mark's Church was commemorated by an Historic Pageant Sunday Evening October 20, 1957. The Pageant, called St. Mark, Evangelist and the Church, was written and directed by Mrs. MacGregor. The Pageant was composed of three parts: (1) St. Mark, the Evangelist, (2) Work of Early Christian Missionaries, (3) Light of the Living Church today.

The costumes were from the stained glass windows by Nicola D'Ascenzo in St. Mark's Church. St. Mark, Bishop of Alexandria, was portrayed by Philip Boulden of 1140 Fillmore St. The chairman of the Anniversary celebration was Mr. Walter Gossling.

Church School

From December 1933 until 1940, Mr. Stanley L. Welsh, Curate, was superintendent of the Church School. He was succeeded by Mrs. Carl Collier (then Miss Virginia Wooly). In 1947 the Rector assumed the work of directing and supervising the activities of the Church School. He has been assisted by Lay Persons who have helped in many ways. Mrs. William P. Clausen helped in revising the curriculum and Mrs. Howard P. Denn has done a great deal of visiting and clerical work. When Mrs. Denn resigned, Mr. John Lamb, Student Assistant, assumed these duties.

In 1957, the Rector inaugurated a 9:30 Service to which he invited parents of Church School pupils. Many parents now attend this Service, and after Devotions meet in the social room in the basement for a lesson.

An important part of the Church School is the Mother's Class. Miss May Stearns taught this class for many years. Mrs. Alice Greby succeeded Miss Stearns in 1945. Mrs. Carroll Krewson became teacher of the Mother's Class after Mrs. Grebe's death. Mrs. Krewson is the teacher at the present time.

St. Mark's Bells

Since 1915 the 14 bell Carillon of St. Mark's has called the people of our community to worship. The dedication of these bells was on April 30, 1915.

At the present time these bells are rung before Service by one of seven Laymen: Charles Taylor, Roy Ricker, Thomas Flint, Walter Kleinfelder, William Kirkman, Harry Shuttleworth and Alfred Smedley.

In addition to the carillion, we have a toll bell which is used for 7:45 Service and for funerals and other services when a bell is needed. The weight of this bell is 1201 pounds, and it was presented as a Christmas present from the Sunday School on Christmas Day, 1859. On December 27, 1959, the hundredth anniversary of the gift of this bell was celebrated in Church School by a reading of the original presentation by Mr. Samuel Ballam and the ringing of the century old bell by Miss Rhoda E. Scrivens and the nine members of her class. These children were: Ruth E. Maletz, Helen L. Clark, Patty A. Strong, Marilea I. Saybolt, Clifford Peberty, Rose Zagani, Linda Sherman, Ronald Schalley, and John Zagani.

Church Historian

A Department of History was established in 1955 by St. Mark's Vestry. Mr. Harry Shuttleworth was appointed Church Historian. Since his appointment he has collected many records and letters dating back to 1845. This collection has been organized and catalogued by Mr. Shuttleworth. He gladly displays and explains parts of this great collection to interested individuals and organizations. The collection is housed in the Parish House. The Historian gladly conducts tours of the Church by appointment during which he explains its history. He also solicits letters, records or objects connected with the History of St. Mark's in the possession of individuals to add to his historical collection.

Memorials

All through the years St. Mark's people have given gifts to the Church to the glory of God and in remembrance of Loved Ones. The number of Memorials given during the period 1932-1963 is so large that it will not be possible to list them in this sketch.

Growth of Organizations

A Living Parish

Within St. Mark's Church there are many organizations, seeking to serve the various needs of the people and in turn contributing to the support of the Parish. These organizations came into being, or were re-activated, during the period 1932-1963.

UNDER MR. CARHART

The Centennial Celebration in 1932 marked the beginning of a new surge in growth. The SERVERS GUILD was established during the Rectorship of Mr. Carhart - 1933-1944. In September, 1935, the Servers replaced the Vestrymen in assisting the congregation in coming to Communion. This custom continues today. Since 1940, Mr. Harry Shuttleworth, the Church Historian, has sponsored this organization. He has been a devoted and conscientious sponsor through the years.

The ST. CECELIA CHOIR was established in 1934. Margaret Buckley was appointed leader with Bernice Murphy as assistant and with Ardelia Cocker as organist. The mothers made the red vestments and the girls' choir became well known in Frankford. In 1946 Anne MacGregor became leader.

The custom of holding Services for THE CHURCHING OF THE COLORS on Armistice Day (now Veteran's Day) was established by Mr. Carhart.

THE FONT ROLL, in which are enrolled newly Baptized infants, was established. This unusual service sends material through the mail to parents, until their children are ready for Church School, and also keeps in personal touch by way of visitations. Mrs. Edward Carnall is chairman.

With vision towards the future, Mr. Carhart, in 1935, established THE ENDOWMENT FUND, through the efforts of John H. Gossling and Dr. Charles N. Sturtevant. Dr. Sturtevant and Miss Melissa Smith were the first trustees. In 1938 the fund was $3000.00. In 1962 it was worth approximately $63,000.00.

UNDER MR. FISCHER

During the years of Mr. Fischer's Rectorship, much growth and many improvements have taken place, and continue to do so.

One of Mr. Fischer's first activities was to re-organize the CHURCH SCHOOL. Mr. Laedlein was appointed Superintendent, and a system of graded classes was established. Later, a 9:30 Church School Family Service was inaugurated for parents who brought their children to the School. This group has grown into the Parent's Class, now taught by Mrs. William P. Clausen, and it supplements the Mother's Class, now taught by Mrs. J. Carroll Krewson.

The USHERS ASSOCIATION was created early in Mr. Fischer's Rectorship. This group of men have improved the mechanics of the 11 o'clock Service.

On October 18, 1948, the GIRLS FRIENDLY SOCIETY was re-activated. This organization benefits our girls from 7 to 14 years of age, and meets on Saturday mornings.

The BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION was established in 1951. This organization provides fellowship and opportunity for service for the women who cannot attend daytime meetings. This group has interesting and lively meetings on second and fourth Tuesdays.

ST. MARK'S LIBRARY, established in 1853, was re-organized and re-activated by Mr. Fischer and the name was changed to ST. MARK'S CHURCH SCHOOL LIBRARY. Mr. Howard Denn was appointed librarian. The library contributes a great deal to the intellectual and spiritual life of the parish. Mr. Denn has acquired thousands of books.

THE NURSERY was established to care for young children while their parents attend Services.

The JUNIOR VESTRY, now called THE AUXILIARY VESTRY, came into being in October 1947. The purpose of this organization was to train young men in the responsibilities of Vestrymen. These men contribute many services to the Church, one of which is preparing the Year Book.

St. Mark's Men's League was re-organized and named THE CHURCHMEN'S LEAGUE. These men, and all of the men of the parish are included and invited to this organization, meet once a month for fellowship and service. The Annual Oyster Supper and other activities are sponsored by this group.

In order to give opportunity for married couples to meet, become acquainted and serve the Church as a group, the MR. AND MRS. CLUB was brought into being. One of their many activities is to visit and take gifts to shut-ins at Christmas and Easter.

The great increase in organizational activity in the parish created the need for some kind of coordinating control. To meet this need, THE PARISH COUNCIL was established. Meeting at the call of the Rector, this group includes representatives of every Parish Organization who discuss the physical needs of the church and act as a clearing house for dates in order to avoid duplication and conflicting activities.

The YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP was re-activated, and today is one of the finest in the city. A great amount of credit must be given to the efforts of the Lay Advisors who gave much time to our Youth. Mr. and Mrs. David Clark, Mr. and Mrs. James Ickes, have sponsored the group for several years. Today, the Young People are under the leadership of the Curate, assisted by Mrs. David Clark, Mr. Winfield McKeown, and Junior Advisor Pat Gibson.

The years 1932-1963 were years of growth in the life of St. Mark's Parish. But they were also years in which maintenance of the magnificent buildings entrusted to the Parish was of prime importance. Under the Rectorship of Mr. Fischer, the buildings have been restored and maintained in excellent condition, ready for the many decades which are to follow in the future. Historical credit must be given to those who have an eye to the future, while emeshed in the entanglements of the present. This credit goes to the present Rector of St. Mark's Parish - The Reverend Albert F. Fischer jr.

The years of internal growth at St. Mark's were not years in which the Parish failed to consider the needs of others. St. Mark's has extended herself outside her borders, and helped struggling parishes and Missions. While some help was given to St. Nathaniels Parish at E and Allegheny Sts., St. Mark's can be remembered for the years of extensive service given to St. Stephen's in Bridesburg. With the closing of St. Stephen's, St. Mark's administered the many details required in the sale of the property and the investment of the proceeds. St. Mark's today is again responsible for the Ministry to the Bridesburg Area, a work which she started almost 100 years ago.

Conclusion

The History of St. Mark's from 1932 to 1963 is a history of growth and service. Those who have contributed to it can be justly proud. And yet, not so proud that the future is not considered. The next History to be written in the years to come, will recount what we do now, and will be written by our children. We look back at what we have accomplished, and one fact is evident --

WE ARE HISTORY

Note: We are indebted to Mrs. William P. Clausen and Mr. Harry Shuttleworth for gathering together the historical information used to compile this sketch.